

A MAILING PACKAGE

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to a package for sending goods in and is particularly, but not exclusively, concerned with a returnable package for exchanging goods between people, for instance returning used parts or refills in the same package in which the replacement is received

10 Background of the Invention

 It is known for suppliers of refills for refillable devices to request the supplied person to return a used refill to a return address, e.g. the supplier, in the package in which a replacement is sent. However, it has been found difficult to
15 achieve a high degree of compliance to this request. One reason for this is that typically the supplier provides a return address label inside the package sent to the user which the user then needs to adhere to the outer surface of the package for return mailing with the used refill.

20 The need for a high degree of compliance in having used or redundant products returned will be compounded for products having electrical or electronic features when the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive is implemented in the European Union. This is because the WEEE Directive will make the producers of such goods responsible for their recycling or disposal.

25 It is therefore an aim of the present invention to provide a package which promotes its return with a product therein to a predetermined address.

Summary of the Invention

30 According to the present invention there is provided a package having a container part which defines a cavity having an opening for receiving a product, a closure part which is movable from a first closed position, in which it closes the

opening to the cavity, to an open position in which it opens the opening to the cavity, and an outer surface having an address thereon which is covered by the closure part in the first closed position thereof, the closure part having a first configuration in the first closed position and being adapted to be moved from the first configuration to a second configuration in which it is able to adopt a second closed position in which it closes the opening to the cavity, but leaves the address uncovered.

The invention further provides a blank of sheet material dimensioned and arranged to form a package according to the invention.

Preferred features of the invention are set forth in the subordinate claims appended hereto.

By way of example, a non-limiting embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying FIGURES of drawings.

Brief Description of the FIGURES of Drawings

FIGURE 1 is a perspective front view of a mailable package in accordance with the present invention having a container part and a closure part in a closed position.

FIGURE 2 is a perspective front view of the package showing the closure part in the process of being moved to an open position.

FIGURE 3 is a further perspective front view of the package showing the closure part in the open position revealing a return mailing address on a front panel of the container part.

FIGURE 4 is a yet further perspective front view of the package in which an outer portion of the closure part is being detached from an inner portion of the closure part.

FIGURE 5 is a perspective front view of the package in a condition to be remailed with the inner portion of the closure part closing off the container part.

5 FIGURE 6 is a plan view of a blank of sheet material from which the package is formed.

Detailed Description of the Exemplary Embodiment of the Invention

10 The FIGURES of drawings show a hollow, box-like carton or package 1 in accordance with the invention which comprises a container part 3 and a lid or closure part 5.

15 The package 1 is made from a foldable board material, such as cardboard, and is formed into the rectilinear construction shown in the FIGURES from an appropriately shaped and sized blank of the board material, an example of which is shown in FIGURE 6 indicating the fold lines in chain line about which the blank is folded to form the package 1.

20 The package 1 presents a front panel 7, opposed side panels 9,11, a rear panel 13 and a bottom panel 15. These panels of the package 1 define the container part 3. In addition, the package 1 further presents a top panel 17 and a front flap 19 hinged to the top panel 17 which overlies the front panel 7. The top panel 17 and front flap 19 define the closure part 5 of the package 1.

25 As shown in FIGURE 1, for example, the front flap 19 of the closure part 5 is connected to the front panel 7 of the container part 3 through a perforate connection 21. Other types of frangible or detachable connection, however, could be used. As further shown in FIGURE 1, the front flap 19 is formed with a
30 tab 23 at its lower end and the front panel 7 is formed with a recess 25 adjacent the flap 23 to enable a user's thumb to lift the tab 23 to draw the front flap 19 upwardly to detach or tear the front flap 19 from the front panel 7. This is shown schematically in FIGURE 2.

Referring now to FIGURE 3, this shows the package 1 in its open state with the front flap 19 having been torn away from the front panel 7. It will firstly be seen that in tearing the front flap 19 away from the front panel 7, a return mailing address 27 on the front panel 7 is exposed. It will further be seen that the closure part 5 has separable inner and outer portions 29,31, respectively. The outer portion 31 of the closure part 5 comprises an outer portion 30 of the top panel 17 and the front flap 19 hingeably connected thereto at a fold line 33. The inner portion 29, on the other hand, comprises an inner portion 32 of the top panel 17 and a flap or tongue 34 hinged to the inner portion 32 at a fold line 36. The outer portion 31 has a frangible or detachable connection with the inner portion 29 at a rear edge 35. The outer and inner portions 30, 32 may also be releasably adhered together at the mutually facing surfaces thereof.

Conveniently, the inner surface of the inner portion 32 carries instructions on how to use the package 1. As will be understood, the instructions only become visible after opening the package 1. Such instructions may be diagrammatic

Turning now to FIGURE 4, after the front flap 19 has been detached from the front panel 7, the outer portion 31 of the closure part 5 is detached from the package 1 by breaking the frangible connection between the outer portion 31 and the inner portion 29 at the frangible connection 35.

After a replacement product (not shown) contained in the hollow compartment 41 defined between the container part 3 and the closure part 5 has been removed and replaced with a used or old product (not shown), the package 1 is re-closed by the inner portion 29 of the closure part 5, as shown in FIGURE 5. Specifically, the inner portion 29 of the closure part 5 is closed by tucking the flap 34 thereof into the compartment 41 so as to be held in place between side flaps 45,47 extending from the side panels 9,11 and an inner surface of the front panel 7. This is the same configuration adopted by the inner portion 29 when the

closure part 5 is in the closed position when including the outer portion 31 (FIGURE 1).

5 After appropriate sealing, for instance with adhesive tape, the package 1 is able to be mailed to the return address for appropriate recycling and/or waste disposal of the used product. In this regard, a posting frank or stamp 43 may be provided for promoting compliance of the user in returning the used or old product in the package 1.

10 Not only does the package 1 have the advantage of promoting its sending to the return address 27, the attachment of the front flap 19 to the container part 3 through the frangible connection 21 provides the package 1 with an advantageous tamper-proofing feature since the connection 21 has to be broken for opening of the package 1, but it cannot be restored after its breakage.

15 It will be understood that the present invention is not limited to the package 1 described with reference to the FIGURES, but encompasses all variations, modifications and other guises falling within the scope of the appended claims.

20 As an example, the outer and inner portions 30,32 of the closure part 5 of the package 1 may be stuck together and the front flap 19 frangibly connected to the outer portion 30 at the mutual fold line 33 so that the outer portion 30 is retained in the "return mode" of the package 1.

25 Alternatively, the outer portion 30 of the top panel 17 is dispensed with and the front flap 19 is frangibly connected to the inner portion 29 of the closure part 5 at fold line 36. In use, the front flap 19 is torn away from the container part 3 and the inner portion 29, and the inner portion 29 then opened.

30 A further variation would be to have the front flap 19 formed into an upper section extending downwardly from the fold line 33, and a lower section frangibly connected to the upper section and including the tab 23. To open the package 1,

the lower section of the front flap 19 would be detached from the upper section to leave the upper section to form a double-layer flap with the flap 34 for tucking into the package 1 when it is to be sent to the return address.

- 5 A yet further variation would be to dispense with the outer portion 30 and have the front flap 19 form a detachable extension of the flap 34, e.g. through a perforated connection. In the initial closed position, the flap 34 would be on the outer surface of the front panel 7 with the front flap 19. In operation, the front flap 19 would be torn away from the front panel 7 and the flap 34 to just leave the
10 inner portion 29. The flap 34 would then be tucked into the package 1 for closing the package 1 when it is to be sent to the return address 27.

 In FIGURE 6 the blank for the package 1 is shown as formed from two sheets of material. However, a package in accordance with the invention could
15 be formed from a single sheet or more than two sheets.

 It will further be understood that the use of relative orientation terms such as "front", "rear" etc. in the specific description are not used in a limiting sense, but for simplicity.

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 Finally, the use of reference numerals from the specific description in the appended claims is not to be taken as having a limiting effect on the scope of the claims, but purely for illustration.